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NSC BRIEFING 26 August 1964

NEAR EAST ARMS RACE

I. Nasir's UAR and Israel apparently both recognize the possibility of a show-down developing between them should the situation in Jordan get out of control.

A. Israeli leaders have repeatedly said that they cannot tolerate being surrounded by states under Nasir's control, and the Israeli public has long been conditioned to the "necessity" for military action to improve Israel's position should encirclement threaten.

B. Nasir has said that if Israel moved into Jordan, the UAR "of course" would have to fight; while this may well be bluff and while Nasir is no doubt aware that the UAR is still weaker militarily than Israel, he would probably feel under real pressure to do something militarily to counter an Israeli move.

II. Against this background, both the UAR and Israel have moved in the last two months to acquire more and better arms. Both apparently feared that the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly might result in an arms embargo over the Near East.

DIA review(s) completed.

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III. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] the UAR has received substantial arms deliveries from the Soviet Bloc in recent weeks, and that it is seeking more.

A. In the past six weeks, the Soviet Union has delivered to the UAR's Syrian region, [redacted] arms 25X1 which have included:

1. 50 to 60 T-54 medium tanks.

2. Over 150 artillery pieces, some of which were antitank and antiaircraft weapons.

3. Probably a squadron (about 15) of MIG-17 jet fighters. 25X1

4. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] As of now, the Soviet Bloc has supplied the UAR with some $400,000,000 worth of arms ($250,000,000 to Egypt and $150,000,000 to Syria). 25X1

[redacted]

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